



NASA Procedural Requirements

COMPLIANCE IS MANDATORY**NPR 9700.1**Effective Date: September 30,
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Request Notification of Change

(NASA Only)

Subject: Travel (w/change 3) dated September 12, 2011**Responsible Office: Office of the Chief Financial Officer**[| TOC](#) | [ChangeHistory](#) | [Preface](#) | [Chapter1](#) | [Chapter2](#) | [AppendixA](#) | [ALL](#)

Chapter 2. Requirements Relating to Conference Attendance and Reporting

2.1 Overview.

This chapter sets forth requirements for planning and reporting conference costs and adhering to foreign conference attendance limits.

2.2 Source of Requirements.

2.2.1 Foreign Conference Attendance Limit. All recent appropriations acts governing NASA, including the Consolidated Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year (FY) 2010, limit NASA attendance at any one foreign conference to 50 NASA employees.

2.2.2 FY 2009 Funding Cap. The 2008 NASA Authorization Act limited NASA's 2009 conference-related expenses to \$5 million. This funding limit was not extended and thus applies only to any program year (PY) for which PY 2009 funds still remain available for use.

2.2.3 Reports on NASA-Sponsored Conferences. The 2008 Authorization Act also required NASA to provide detailed quarterly reports to NASA's Office of Inspector General (OIG) on NASA-sponsored conferences costing more than \$20,000. While this requirement was not continued in subsequent legislation, NASA will continue to collect and review this information internally.

2.2.4 Reports on All Conference-Related Costs. Congress also directed NASA to report all costs of both sponsoring and attending conferences in FY 2008 and FY 2009. Despite NASA's improved conference reporting process, this report proved very labor-intensive and costly to implement. As Congress has not extended this requirement to subsequent years and as it is not in the best interests of the Agency to continue expending the considerable resources required to generate this report, it is no longer generated. However, the Agency continues monitoring these costs in less detail for internal use.

2.3 Roles and Responsibilities.

2.3.1 The Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO) shall:

- a. Maintain policies and procedures for conference-related data collection and reporting.
- b. Coordinate the final review of the quarterly sponsored conference report.
- c. Designate an Agency travel policy coordinator to oversee these processes and, in the event of conflicting determinations by conference points of contacts (POCs), to issue final determinations under this NPR.

2.3.2 Each Center Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and Official-in-Charge (OIC) of an HQ Office shall designate a conference reporting point of contact (POC) and an alternate POC for that Center or Office.

2.3.3 Each Center/Office Conference Reporting POC shall:

- a. Help travelers, travel preparers, sponsoring organization POCs, and other Center/Office conference reporting POCs determine whether a given event meets this NPR's definition of "conference" and "NASA-sponsored" (see 2.4).
- b. Help the NASA Conference Tracking System (NCTS) moderator and Agency travel policy coordinator resolve conference determination questions.
- c. Provide guidance to sponsor organization POCs concerning the completion and submission of the NF 1784, NASA-sponsored event approval, NF 1785, NASA-sponsored conference reporting, and associated report forms.
- d. Oversee the review and correction of their organization's data and other conference report information.
- e. Provide other assistance as requested by the NCTS moderator and travel policy coordinator regarding the Center's/Office's

conference-related matters.

f. Assist with local Center or Office training and awareness efforts pertaining to this NPR.

2.3.4 NASA Conference Sponsor Organizations. Each NASA organization that plans to sponsor a conference shall appoint a sponsor organization POC before making substantive plans and notify the cognizant Center/Office Conference Reporting POC of the name of the Sponsor Organization POC for the event.

2.3.5 Each Sponsor Organization POC shall:

- a. Coordinate with the cognizant Center/Office conference reporting POC(s), beginning with the first stages of planning, to ensure they are aware of the event and to obtain their help with policy and determination questions.
- b. For any conference sponsored, ensure the timely, accurate preparation of the NF 1784, fully substantiate its cost estimates and any supporting documentation, obtain approving official signature, and submit the signed form in a timely manner to NASA Shared Service Center (NSSC).
- c. Upon submitting the NF 1784 and receiving the NCTS Identifier for the conference, ensure that NASA attendees are instructed to use the NCTS Identifier on travel documents. The NSSC Moderator will enter the conference into NCTS and send the NCTS Identifier to the POC.
- d. Ensure the timely and accurate preparation and submission of the NF 1785 and associated conference report documents.
- e. Retain signed version of documents on behalf of the sponsoring organization in accordance with NPR 1440.6.
- f. Provide other assistance as requested by the NCTS moderator and Agency travel policy coordinator with regard to the conference and its associated forms and reports.

2.3.6. Office of International and Interagency Relations (OIIR) shall:

- a. Provide policy guidance regarding foreign travel and attendance related to foreign travel.
- b. Review and coordinate certain conference-related foreign travel by NASA personnel.
- c. Oversee the process to determine appropriate allocations in a timely manner for international conferences involving more than 50 NASA Federal employees who may seek to attend .

2.3.7 NSSC shall:

- a. Assign an NCTS moderator to process requests for new conferences to be added to the NCTS database.
- b. Maintain NCTS.

2.3.8 The NCTS moderator shall:

- a. Maintain and monitor the Agency conference reporting mailbox.
- b. Coordinate with the POCs and Agency travel policy coordinator to resolve any requests for conference determination and to update NCTS.
- c. Assist the OCFO in maintaining reporting information received from conference sponsors and providing quarterly summaries to management.
- d. Notify all Center/Office conference reporting POCs and alternates when conferences are added to NCTS.

2.3.9 NASA Enterprise Applications Competency Center (NEACC). The NEACC shall maintain and update regularly a list of NCTS codes available for selection in the electronic travel system travel authorization function code field, for use by travelers and travel preparers when preparing travel authorizations involving foreign and NASA-sponsored conferences.

2.3.10 Travelers, Travel Preparers, and Travel Approvers. All NASA travelers, travel preparers, and travel approvers are responsible for familiarizing themselves and complying with the requirements of this document.

2.4 Applicability and Definition of "Conference" and "Reportable."

2.4.1 Definition. For purposes of both conference reporting and foreign conference attendance limitation, the term "conference" means a meeting:

- a. Held for consultation, exchange of information, or discussion.
- b. Having speakers or discussion panels focusing on topical matters of interest and involving participation of a range of attendees from multiple agencies and/or nongovernmental entities.
- c. At least part of which is held at a non-NASA facility (see FAQs 4-1 through 4-3 for more information on what constitutes a NASA facility).
- d. Which is neither a NASA internal meeting (including operational meetings) nor formal training (see 2.4.2 and 2.4.3 below).

2.4.2 NASA Internal Meetings Are Excluded. The term "conference" does not include NASA internal meetings.

2.4.2.1 Definition of NASA Internal Meeting: Attendance and Subject Matter. A NASA internal meeting is a meeting attended only by:

- a. NASA civil service employees, detailees, special Government employees, or individuals attending on NASA-issued invitational travel orders (NASA Attendees).
- b. Employees of other Federal agencies, NASA contractors or subcontractors, or parties to intergovernmental or interagency agreements with NASA or the U.S. Government, when meeting on matters related to NASA's programs or operations.
- c. NASA grantees, their principal investigators, and co-investigators, when meeting on matters directly related to the work

performed under a grant. d. NASA Space Act Agreement partners or prospective partners, when meeting on matters directly related to the activities covered under the Agreement.

2.4.2.2 Routine NASA Business, NASA Public Affairs Events are Not Conferences.

a. The term "conference" does not apply to:

(1) Routine NASA business; such as program/project reviews and meetings of international government officials to coordinate technical, operational, or programmatic matters; site visits and launches; or advisory committee meetings.

(2) Public affairs events the general public may attend gratis.

b. If the sole purpose of the meeting is to discuss NASA business such as scientific/technical or administrative/management issues or priorities, plans, or activities for a specific NASA program, project, or mission support matter, then the meeting is not a conference for purposes of this directive.

c. If a meeting is, otherwise, an internal NASA meeting, the presence of outside speakers or facilitators does not in itself make the meeting a "conference."

2.4.3 Formal Training Is Excluded. The term "conference" does not apply to meetings limited to formal training of NASA employees.

2.4.3.1 Definition of Training. For purposes of this NPR, training is defined as a planned, prepared, and coordinated program, course, curriculum, subject, system, or routine of instruction or education in scientific, professional, technical, mechanical, trade, clerical, fiscal, administrative, or other fields intended to improve individual and organizational performance and assist in achieving the Agency's mission and performance goals.

2.4.3.2 Training versus Conference.

a. An established course of instruction in a substantive field in a classroom setting is not a conference, and holding such a course at a rented facility does not transform it into a conference.

b. However, if a conference has a training aspect (e.g., helps employees maintain certifications or earn continuing education credits) but more closely meets the definition of "conference" than that of "training," it shall be treated as a conference. Many conferences present substantive educational information that does not meet the definition of formal training.

2.5 Foreign Conferences.

2.5.1 General. The requirements of this NPR do not replace, but are in addition to, other Agency or Center foreign travel approval requirements.

2.5.2 Attendance Limit. In recent years, NASA's annual Appropriations Acts, most recently the 2010 Consolidated Appropriations Act, have stated that no more than 50 NASA employees may attend a conference held outside the U.S. This limitation includes employees whose travel is fully reimbursable.

2.5.3. Definition of Foreign Conference.

2.5.3.1 United States. "United States," as defined in the Federal Travel Regulations (FTR), means the 48 contiguous states, the District of Columbia, and the states and areas defined under the term "Non-Foreign Area." Non-Foreign Area includes Alaska and Hawaii, the Commonwealths of Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Northern Mariana Islands, and the territories and possessions of the U.S. (excluding the Trust Territories of the Pacific Islands). (See FTR § 300-3.1)

2.5.3.2 NASA Facilities Outside the U.S. For purposes of this attendance limit, an event that would normally not be considered a "conference" because it is held entirely at a NASA facility shall be considered a "foreign conference" if the facility is outside the U.S., provided all other elements of the "conference" definition are met.

2.5.4 Non-Program Travel. Foreign conferences are "non-program" foreign travel. (See Appendix A.) If a trip combines travel to a foreign conference with other purposes, the procedures for "non-program" travel shall be followed.

2.5.5 Foreign Conference POCs.

2.5.5.1 Purpose. To better coordinate NASA's foreign conference-related travel, each Center and HQ Office shall designate a single POC to coordinate and monitor such travel.

2.5.5.2 All foreign travel and foreign conference POCs shall be identified to OIIR.

2.5.6 NCTS and Foreign Conferences. NCTS (See Paragraph 2.7) is an automated Web-based system that assigns each NASA-sponsored or foreign conference a unique identifier to facilitate cost and attendance tracking. NCTS also enables foreign conference travel approvers to register the name of a prospective attendee and receive automated verification that the attendance limit has not been reached prior to approving that attendee's travel. NCTS automatically accepts requests up to an Agency moderator-established first threshold, permitting automatic NCTS approval of names for conferences that only a small number of NASA employees are expected to attend. For conferences for which a larger NASA attendance appears likely, once the initial threshold has been reached, the moderator manually accepts registration for the remaining spaces as approved by OIIR, working with other offices and Centers to determine Agency-wide allotments, never exceeding 50 total.

2.5.7 Process.

2.5.7.1 NCTS Identifier. All persons preparing travel documents for foreign conference attendance shall include the NCTS Identifier on all associated travel documents.

2.5.7.2 Travel Approvers. All approvers remain responsible for approving only those foreign conference travel authorizations that fall within the threshold of 50 attendees (NASA-wide) to any one foreign conference and shall not approve such travel before receiving NCTS approval.

2.5.7.3 OICs and Foreign Travel Coordinators shall ensure that:

a. Foreign travel authorizations are submitted at least four weeks before the planned departure date.

- b. Foreign travel reports are submitted weekly to OIIR.
- c. The NCTS is used consistently.

2.5.7.4 Center or Office Foreign Travel Procedures. Once approved in NCTS, travel authorizations associated with foreign conferences shall be processed for approval in accordance with other established Center or HQ procedures for foreign travel.

2.5.7.5 Supervisor Approval Required.

Note: NCTS approval pertains only to the 50-person limit; it in no way removes the need for travelers to secure their supervisor's approval to attend a given conference nor supersedes a supervisor's disapproval of a request to attend a given conference.

2.6 NASA-Sponsored Conferences.

2.6.1 Definition of "NASA-Sponsored Conference." A NASA-sponsored conference is a "conference" as defined in 2.4 above, of which NASA is a "primary sponsor" as defined in 2.6.2 and 2.6.3 below.

2.6.2 Definition of "Sponsor" (Also see "Primary Sponsor," 2.6.3).

2.6.2.1 Costs Constituting Sponsorship. NASA is considered a "sponsor" if it funds costs:

- a. For hosting (e.g., facility rental) or underwriting (e.g., financial support to another sponsor of the conference, brand awareness, etc.).
- b. That are more than de minimis, i.e., that are a significant, not just a minor, share of total conference expenses.

2.6.2.2 Costs Not Constituting Sponsorship. NASA is not considered a sponsor based solely on participation costs, such as for:

- a. Civil service employees' travel.
- b. Exhibitions and presentations.

2.6.3 Definition of "Primary Sponsor." NASA is considered a primary sponsor only if it is the principal sponsor of the event or one of the principal cosponsors if there are multiple sponsors.

2.6.3.1 In comparing co-sponsors' costs to determine whether NASA is a primary sponsor versus a minor sponsor, only sponsorship costs, not travel costs, shall be considered.

2.6.3.2 If NASA pays (to the best of its information) approximately the same as or more than the other largest payers of hosting costs, it is considered one of the primary sponsors.

2.6.3.3 If the largest contributor pays substantially more in hosting costs than NASA (e.g., over twice what NASA pays), NASA is not considered a primary sponsor.

2.6.3.4 For assistance determining whether NASA is a primary sponsor of a given conference, sponsors and attendees shall consult their Center POC. A list of Center POCs can be found at <http://conference.nasa.gov>.

2.6.4 Conferences Sponsored by NASA Grantees and Cooperative Agreement Partners.

If a NASA grantee or cooperative agreement partner sponsors a conference, NASA is not typically considered the sponsor, even if part of the award is used to pay conference hosting costs, since these awards are program-specific. However, if the agreement or grant specifically requires the recipient to host (and not just disseminate results at) a conference on behalf of NASA, the conference is considered sponsored by NASA and is reportable if it meets the requirements of Section 2.7.2.2 below (i.e., it is a "conference" per Section 2.4, NASA is a primary sponsor, and the total cost to NASA is over \$20,000).

2.6.5 Multiple NASA Organizations Co-Sponsoring One Conference. If multiple NASA Offices or Centers fund a conference, the Office or Center responsible for the event's overall planning and sponsorship shall be responsible for determining whether it is a conference, approving the site selection, contracting for facilities and services, and preparing and submitting the associated NF 1784 and post-conference report, including the NF 1785.

2.6.6 Cost-Effective NASA-Sponsored Events.

2.6.6.1 Use of NASA or Federal Sites.

a. For both conference and non-conference events primarily sponsored by NASA, NASA sponsor organizations shall take reasonable efforts to determine if there is a NASA or other Federal facility available for the event on a more cost-effective basis that satisfies the event objectives.

b. If a NASA conference sponsor organization selects a non-Federal facility as the conference site, the NASA sponsor shall clearly explain on the NF 1784 (see Section 2.7 below) the reason for this choice.

2.6.6.2 Additional Considerations Regarding Cost and Appropriateness.

a. NASA sponsors shall comply with Government-wide regulations on conference planning. (See 41 CFR 301-74 (http://www.access.gpo.gov/nara/cfr/waisidx_09/41cfr301-74_09.html)).

b. Being mindful of cost considerations, planners shall give precedence to sites within the proximity of a NASA Center meeting "local" travel requirements for local attendees, whenever such sites would meet the event objectives, to reduce the number of attendees requiring TDY travel and lodging accommodations.

c. In addition to cost considerations, NASA organizations planning to sponsor an event shall be conscious of appearances in selecting the event site.

(1) Planners shall avoid selecting destinations likely to create an appearance that the event is wasting Government resources in order to facilitate personal vacations or entertainment for employees.

(2) Planners shall take care to select event locations that are cost-justified and appropriate to the purpose of the event and that minimize, to the greatest extent possible, any appearance of impropriety.

d. NASA event sponsor organizations shall also be cognizant of the appearance concerns inherent in some forms of collateral entertainment, such as golf tournaments, hospitality suites, and onsite gambling facilities and, to prevent the public perception that Federal funds are being used inappropriately, schedule such events only during off-duty hours and clarify that they are voluntary and that participants are responsible for their own associated costs.

2.6.7 Funding and Collection of Fees.

2.6.7.1 As a general rule, Federal agencies lack authority to collect registration fees for conferences or other events they sponsor.

a. Agencies shall not supplement their appropriated funding for an event by collecting conference fees, exhibitor fees, attendance fees, or sponsorship fees from other persons or entities.

b. NASA shall not use contractors to accomplish what the Agency is prohibited from doing accordingly.

(1) Conference planners shall not collect fees to offset the Agency's costs of hosting a conference.

(2) Before retaining a professional conference planner, the Agency shall ascertain that enough appropriated funds are available to pay the contractor's costs.

(3) Even if a Space Act Agreement allows the partner to collect registration fees, doing so may raise other fiscal concerns, such as augmentation of Agency appropriations; in such situations, planners shall consult with their appropriate local counsel before proceeding.

(4) NASA shall not solicit NASA contractors or other non-NASA entities to contribute to NASA events without prior consultation with their local CFO's and counsel's offices.

c. NASA employees shall not enter into arrangements with outside entities or persons for sponsorship of meals, refreshments, or entertainment for or at NASA events without prior consultation with their local CFO's and counsel's offices.

(1) Outside sponsorship does not become allowable simply because there are no or insufficient appropriated funds for an event.

(2) Corporate sponsorship may raise appearance or gift issues. NASA event planners shall refrain from making arrangements involving corporate sponsorship until local counsel has fully reviewed and approved the sponsorship and associated arrangements.

(3) NASA shall not solicit NASA contractors or other non-NASA entities to contribute to these aspects of NASA events.

d. Certain circumstances may afford cost-sharing opportunities. For instance, in some cases, NASA and a contractor may sign a no-cost contract under which each party bears certain costs and the contractor collects fees to offset its own costs. However, no NASA sponsor organization shall enter into any such agreements or structure an event to permit acceptance of fees or services before seeking advice from their local CFO's and counsel's office.

2.6.8 Using Appropriated Funds for Food, Refreshments, and/or Entertainment at Conferences. 2.6.8.1 General Prohibition, Limitations, and Requirements. GAO case law generally prohibits agencies from using appropriated funds to pay for food at agency-sponsored events because food is a personal expense. a. NASA may use appropriated funds for meals or entertainment only in certain limited exceptions in 2.6.8.2 through 2.6.8.6 below.

b. Even when such use is not prohibited, employees shall try to avoid structuring events to provide food unless necessary to achieve the Agency's goals.

c. If an organization believes that use of appropriated funds for food or entertainment at a NASA-sponsored conference is permissible under one or more of the exceptions in 2.6.8.2 through 2.6.8.6 below:

(1) The Approving Official (see 2.7.1.4) shall explain the rationale for providing food under the applicable exception(s) in Section VI of NF-1784 (see 2.7.1), seeking guidance from their local CFO's and counsel's office as needed.

(2) The sponsoring office shall provide clear written reminder(s) (e.g., via event Web sites, applications, announcements, e-mails, etc.) to all attending employees to exclude from their travel vouchers reimbursement requests for any meals already provided at Government expense.

d. Under the circumstances described in 2.6.9.1, NASA shall not provide food to non-Federal persons, unless they pay for their own food in an appropriate manner that does not augment the Agency's appropriations, e.g., under a no-cost contract between NASA and the contractor, where fees for food/refreshments go to the contractor. 2.6.8.2 Exception: Formal Conferences.

a. The Government Employees Training Act (5 U.S.C. § 4110) allows agencies to spend appropriated funds "for expenses of attendance at meetings which are concerned with the functions or activities for which the appropriation is made."

b. Pursuant to this authority, these expenses may include meals and refreshments at a formal, NASA-hosted conference when:

(1) The meals and refreshments are incidental to (i.e., are associated with, or occur as a consequence of) the conference.

(2) Attendance at the meals and during the refreshments is important for NASA to ensure the full participation of attendees in essential discussions, lectures, or speeches concerning the purpose of the conference.

(3) Substantial conference functions also occur at other times than when food is served.

c. The definition of a "formal" conference, for purposes of establishing that food may be provided, is one that includes: topical matters of interest, the participation of multiple agencies and/or nongovernmental participants, a published substantive agenda, registration, and scheduled speakers or discussion panels.

(1) Meetings that discuss business matters internal to NASA or other topics with little relevance outside NASA do not constitute formal conferences. In most cases, NASA shall not use appropriated funds to provide meals and refreshments at such events.

(2) Conference sponsors who intend to use a Government purchase card to pay for any or all of such food and refreshments shall comply with Procurement Information Circulation 10-14 and other applicable procurement guidance.

2.6.8.3 Exception: NASA-Sponsored Conference Venues where Food Costs are**Non-Negotiable.**

a. If a venue provides food and/or refreshments as part of its facility rental package and, following request by NASA, the venue will not negotiate the cost for the food out of the package, the Agency may pay the full fee and allow the food/refreshments to be provided.

b. However, if a venue offers to negotiate an option to either exclude or include food/refreshments as part of a package deal, the exception allowed in 2.6.8.3.a for non-negotiable food costs shall not apply.

(1) In cases such as 2.6.8.3.b above where the venue will negotiate out the food/refreshments and their associated charges, the NASA organization may only accept a package that excludes the food/refreshments and saves the associated costs.

(2) The standard for non-negotiability is met only if the venue negotiates an entire package that includes food and declines to negotiate a lesser rate that excludes the food. If the Agency refuses the meals and refreshments, it is still charged the full package amount: i.e., where the charge is the same regardless of whether the venue provides the food and/or refreshments or not.

(3) If food is paid for with appropriated funds because the non-negotiability standard is met as described above, the employees' per diem shall be reduced to reflect any meals provided. No per diem reduction is necessary to account for provision of a simple water and coffee service, as that is considered de minimis (i.e., insignificant in the pertinent context).

2.6.8.4 Exception: Food at Awards Ceremonies. Rules governing use of appropriated funds for food, refreshments, and other purposes differ in the case of awards ceremonies (including ceremonies held in conjunction with a conference) as opposed to conferences as follows.

a. The Government Employees Incentive Awards Act allows use of appropriated funds for awards to Federal employees.

(1) The Act likewise allows use of appropriated funds for necessary expenses connected with honorary recognition of those employees, including food and refreshments for attendees at an awards ceremony.

(2) The Act provides no authority to use appropriated funds to honor non-employees.

b. Appropriated funds may only be used to provide food and/or refreshments for such awards ceremonies if:

(1) The event includes presentation of the awards in front of an audience other than awardees.

(2) The Agency has determined that the food/refreshments will materially enhance the ceremony.

(3) The food/refreshments are appropriate for the given circumstances and are served as part of the ceremony.

c. While light refreshments such as snacks, cake, hors d'oeuvres, sodas, and punch are typically appropriate for most awards ceremonies, meals are rarely appropriate. Approving Officials considering using appropriated funds for meals at employee award ceremonies held in conjunction with a NASA-sponsored conference shall obtain concurrence from their local Deputy Chief Financial Officer (DCFO) before proceeding.

2.6.8.5 Exception: Food at Receptions and Representation Events. Each year, NASA receives a small amount of appropriated funding, known as the Official Representational Fund (ORF) or the "Administrator's Fund," to use for official receptions and other representation purposes. If a NASA organization wants to use appropriated funds to purchase food and refreshments for an event that has a reception or representation purpose, but none of the exceptions described above (training, conference, awards ceremony) apply, it may be permissible to use ORF funds for this purpose. For information on when the funds may be used and the process for applying to the Administrator's office for such use, see NPD and NPR 9050.1, Official Representational Fund.

2.6.8.6 Exception: Food for Training Events. Per the Government Employees Training Act (5 U.S.C. § 4109), agencies may spend appropriated funds to reimburse employees (though not non-employees) for necessary expenses, including food and refreshments, incident to an authorized training program.

2.6.8.7 NASA-Sponsored Events at which Attendees Pay for their Own Food Expenses. NASA may also arrange for food to be provided at a NASA-sponsored event, as long as NASA structures the event in such a way that:

a. Attendees pay for their own food.

b. The Agency's appropriations are not thereby augmented.

(1) That is, NASA shall not set up a contract with a venue that includes providing food and then collect fees to offset NASA's costs.

(2) However, if the venue permits it, the NASA sponsor organization may arrange (outside NASA's contract) for an individual employee to collect attendee payments for food and pay them directly to the venue. For example, a venue may be willing to provide box lunches outside of the event contract and be paid directly by the attendees on the day of the event.

(3) Another option is for the venue to set up a pay-for-food kiosk where attendees can buy food onsite.

2.6.9. Using Appropriated Funds to Pay Travel Expenses for Non-Federal Participants .

2.6.9.1 General Prohibition. NASA is prohibited by law from using appropriated funds to pay for the travel, transportation, and/or subsistence of non-Federal attendees at meetings. "Meetings" in this context includes NASA-sponsored events , such as conferences.

2.6.9.2 Exception: "Employees" under FTR Section 301-1.2 (Invitational Travelers and Intermittent Employees). NASA may pay for travel, transportation, and subsistence of persons who meet the definition of "employee" under FTR Section 301-2 (for example, invitational travelers and special Government employees) that perform a direct benefit for NASA.

a. In such cases an official NASA travel authorization shall be required.

b. For details, see Appendix A, Part 301-32.

2.6.10 Related Information on NASA Payments for Civil Service Employees Travel Expenses.

2.6.10.1 Payments to venue for food and lodging of civil service employees on travel. Whether for a conference or other type of travel, NASA may pay a venue directly for meals and/or lodging for civil service employees on travel, provided payments are consistent with statutory and regulatory limits on per diem and actual amounts and employee travel reimbursement claims are reduced to account for the meals and/or lodging provided. See the travel section of this NPR for further information.

2.6.10.2 Payment for "light refreshments" for civil service employees on travel to an official event. Similarly, whether for conference or other travel, NASA may pay for "light refreshments" for NASA employees on travel to an official event. See the travel section of this NPR for a definition of the persons covered by this provision, allowable types of refreshments, and related guidance.

2.6.11 Mementos, Awards, and Speakers' Gifts.

2.6.11.1 Necessary versus Optional Items.

a. Appropriated funds may be used to purchase items for attendees that are necessary for the proper functioning of a conference, such as nametags, notepads, and pens.

b. In general, appropriated funds shall not be used to purchase tokens, gifts, or souvenirs or to distribute such items to Federal employees, invited speakers, or other outside persons at a NASA event.

2.6.11.2 Recognition and Awards.

a. NASA may provide NASA employees appropriate recognition, including official awards for performance of their official duties, as determined by their supervisors in accordance with NPR 3451.1, NASA Awards and Recognition Program.

b. Official representation funds may be used for presentation items to non-NASA speakers if the requirements of NPD and NPR 9050.1, Official Representation Fund, are met.

2.6.11.3 Mementos and Informational Items.

a. NASA has relied on its statutory authority to disseminate information about its programs and activities and the results thereof as a basis to purchase and distribute items of nominal value, such as bookmarks and posters that provide information about NASA programs or missions and related scientific, technical, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) topics.

b. Planners shall ensure there is a link between the type of item selected and the authorized Agency function to disseminate information.

c. If the items are appropriate for purchase and suitable for the particular audience, these types of inexpensive, informational items may be distributed at a NASA event.

d. No such purchases shall be made unless approved in advance by the local Office of Communication, with guidance from the local CFO's and counsel's office as needed.

e. In addition, planners shall not purchase or distribute items that have intrinsic value to the recipient beyond the message they provide (e.g., clothing items, ice scrapers, key chains).

2.6.11.4 Advertising. NASA necessarily uses various methods to publicize an event. In so doing:

a. NASA employees shall avoid giving the appearance that the Agency is endorsing an outside entity, such as posting corporate logos on a NASA Web site.

b. The NASA Insignia (including "the Meatball"), initials, or name may be used only in accordance with Federal regulations and with the approval of the NASA Public Affairs Office.

c. No NASA employee shall permit an outside entity to use the NASA Insignia without first obtaining permission from NASA HQ to do so.

2.7 The NF 1784 and NF 1785: NASA-Sponsored Conference Approval and Reporting.

2.7.1 NF 1784, the NASA-Sponsored Event Approval Form.

2.7.1.1 Purpose. The NF 1784 estimates the probable cost and attendance of a future NASA-sponsored conference. It also ensures that, per the FTR and the NASA FTR Supplement (NFTRS), the sponsoring office has developed cost estimates for several alternative venues to support the approving official's site decision, has considered NASA or other Federal sites, and has analyzed and made reasonable efforts to control food and beverage costs.

2.7.1.2 Required Use. An NF 1784 is required for any conference of which NASA is a primary sponsor as defined in 2.6.3.

Note: If an event is not a "conference," no NF 1784 is required. Sponsors of non-conference events who choose to use an NF 1784 (e.g., for planning or procurement documentation) shall not submit it to NSSC.

2.7.1.3 Preparing the NF 1784.

a. Forms and Instructions. The NF 1784, detailed instructions, and further guidance are available at <http://conference.nasa.gov>.

b. A searchable database of NF 1784s and Post-Conference Reports (including NF 1785s) of previous conferences is available at <https://search.nssc.nasa.gov/search/general.html>. Documents for a particular conference can be found by using the first "Text" search field and inputting between asterisks the NCTS Identifier of the conference for which you wish to search, e.g. *13544-09.*

2.7.1.4 Signatures.

a. Sponsor Organization POC. The Sponsor Organization POC shall review the NF 1784 for completeness and accuracy, sign it, and be prepared to fully substantiate the cost estimates and any supporting documentation to the satisfaction of the approving official.

b. Approving Official: Conferences below \$100,000. A responsible senior executive in the Senior Executive Service (SES) or, if

there is no SES, a senior-level or scientific or professional position (SL/ST) within the sponsoring organization shall approve and sign the NF 1784.

c. Approving Official: Conferences above \$100,000. For events with total estimated costs, including travel, of at least \$100,000, the approving official signing the NF 1784 shall be:

(1) For HQ organizations within a Mission Directorate (MD), the cognizant official no more than two-levels below the MD Associate Administrator (AA).

(2) For HQ organizations that report directly to the Administrator rather than to an MD AA, the cognizant official no more than one-level below the head of that organization.

(3) At Centers, the cognizant official no lower than the level of a Directorate head or equivalent (e.g., Chief Financial Officer, Chief Counsel, etc).

2.7.1.5 Submitting the NF 1784. The sponsoring organization POC shall e-mail a final signed NF 1784, along with required supporting information:

a. To the NSSC (NSSC@NASA.gov), and the sponsoring organization's Center or Office Conference Reporting POC in PDF form, with the e-mail subject line "NF 1784" followed by the NCTS Identifier number and the event's official name.

b. At least 30 days before the start of the event.

2.7.1.6 NF 1784 to be Submitted Before Funds Committed.

a. The sponsoring office POC shall ensure that the NF 1784 has been submitted to NSSC and approved before they request any contracting officer to execute agreements or contracts with conference locations, caterers, or anyone else providing conference services to the Agency.

b. No non-refundable funds shall be committed for the event (e.g., site deposit, catering contracts, etc.) before a completed NF 1784 is submitted to NSSC.

c. An exception shall be allowed for conference support contractor costs associated with preparations leading up to and including event site selection and preparing the NF 1784.

2.7.2 Post-Conference Report Forms (Including the NF 1785).

2.7.2.1 Purpose. The Post-Conference Report records a conference's actual costs, attendance data, contract features, and other related information. It is used for internal management reviews and made available as appropriate for external reviews. The NF 1785 is a key summary document that forms part of this report and is signed by the sponsor organization POC and the approving official as described below. It is not the entire report, but rather summarizes estimates developed in other parts of the report.

2.7.2.2 Required Use.

a. A Post-Conference Report is required for any NASA-sponsored event for which all three of the following are true:

(1) It is a conference, as "conference" is defined in 2.4.

(2) NASA is a primary sponsor as "primary sponsor" is defined in 2.6.3.

(3) Its total actual cost to NASA (including both sponsorship costs and NASA travel costs) exceeds \$20,000 .

b. If the criteria in a.i or ii do not apply to the event, no post-conference report or NF 1785 shall be required for it, but an amended NF-1784 shall be submitted to the NCTS moderator, signed by the sponsor organization POC, clearly indicating that the event has subsequently been determined either not to be a conference or not primarily sponsored by NASA. Upon receipt the NCTS moderator will remove the event from the list of NASA-sponsored conferences.

2.7.2.3 Preparing the Post-Conference Report/NF 1785.

a. Forms and Instructions. Detailed instructions, samples, and templates (where practicable) for the Post-Conference Report, including the NF 1785 and other required displays, are available at <http://conference.nasa.gov> .

b. A searchable database of NF 1784s and Post-Conference Reports (including NF 1785s) of previous conferences is available at <https://search.nssc.nasa.gov/search/general.html> . Documents for a conference can be found by using the first "Text" search field and inputting between asterisks the NCTS Identifier of the conference for which you wish to search, e.g. *13544-09.*

2.7.2.4 Required Signatures.

a. Sponsor Organization POC. The sponsor organization POC shall review the Post-Conference Report for completeness and accuracy, sign the NF 1785, and be prepared to fully explain the report's contents to the satisfaction of the approving official.

b. Approving Official. The responsible official who signed the event's NF 1784 (or, if unavailable, another cognizant senior executive (SES or SL/ST) in the sponsoring organization) shall review the Post-Conference Report and sign the NF 1785 that forms a key part of it.

2.7.2.5 Conferences costing less than \$20,000. If the final cost to NASA of the conference is determined to be less than \$20,000 (i.e., criteria 2.7.2.2.a.iii is determined not to apply to the event), an NF-1785 must still be submitted, but should only include the conference title and identifier, the approximate total cost to NASA clearly showing such is less than \$20,000, and be signed only by the sponsor organization POC. NCTS moderator will then remove the event from the list of NASA-sponsored conferences.

2.7.2.6 Submitting the Post-Conference Report. The POC of the sponsoring organization shall submit a complete and final Post-Conference Report, including the signed NF 1785 to the NSSC (NSSC@NASA.gov) and the sponsoring organization's Center or Office conference reporting POC in PDF form, with the e-mail subject line "Post-Conference Report" followed by the event's NCTS Identifier (number and name). The final post-conference report, including the signed NF 1785, shall be submitted no later than 45 days after the end of the event. The event POC may submit a draft Post-Conference Report, or portions thereof, before this deadline to the NASA Travel Policy Coordinator (but not to the NSSC) to discuss progress on the report and obtain guidance.

2.7.3 Detailed roles and responsibilities for NASA-sponsored conferences and related forms and reports.

2.7.3.1 Sponsor Organization POC. The event sponsor organization POC is responsible for coordinating all aspects of the event's planning, execution, and reporting. This includes the following:

- a. Assisting the approving official as requested to prepare the NF 1784 and forwarding it to NSSC as required.
- b. For NASA-sponsored conferences requiring a Post-Conference report (see 2.6.9); generating an accurate final attendee list (FAL) recording who actually attended the event; obtaining and maintaining a copy of all invoices, receipts, purchase orders, task orders, and other financial documents associated with the conference; assisting the approving official as requested to prepare the Post-Conference Report; forwarding it to the NSSC as required; maintaining a copy of the report and supporting documentation; and making these materials available upon request to appropriate reviewers.

2.7.3.2 Approving Official. The approving official is responsible for:

- a. The quality and integrity of the data in the NF 1784 and the Post-Conference Report (if required). Therefore, the approving official is responsible for assigning appropriate staff to work with the sponsor organization POC to prepare these documents.
- b. Knowledgeably approving (by signing the NF 1784) the conference site that he or she finds to be in the best interest of the Government.
- c. Ensuring that copies of all documents listed in 2.6.10.1.b above are maintained and that preparers are available to explain them to reviewers (e.g., auditors) as requested.

2.7.3.3 Center/Office Conference Reporting POC. The sponsoring organization's cognizant Center/Office conference reporting POC is responsible for providing guidance to the sponsor organization POC on completing the post-conference report.

2.7.3.4 Agency Travel Policy Coordinator. The Agency travel policy coordinator is responsible for periodically reviewing for internal consistency the NF 1784s and Post-Conference Reports submitted, notifying the event sponsor organization POC and the Center/Office conference reporting POC of any obvious inconsistencies or other readily apparent need for revision in the Post-Conference Reports, and making the signed NF 1784s and Post-Conference Reports available for internal management review. The Agency travel policy coordinator is also responsible for updating requirements for these documents, making the updated information available at the Conference Resource Web site, and answering questions that are not fully addressed in the instructions or Web site and that the Center/Office POC is unable to answer.

2.7.3.5 NCTS Moderator. The NCTS moderator is responsible for maintaining searchable electronic records (e.g., PDFs) of all submitted NF 1784s and the NF 1785 portion of Post-Conference Reports and a PDF archive of the complete Post-Conference Reports and any related quarterly reports on NASA-sponsored conferences.

2.8 The NASA Conference Tracking System (NCTS).

2.8.1 Overview.

2.8.1.1 Purpose. NCTS is an Agency-wide database that facilitates cost reporting for NASA-sponsored conferences and tracking of Agency-wide attendance ceilings for foreign conferences to ensure that NASA does not exceed the Congressionally established ceiling of 50 NASA attendees at any one foreign conference.

2.8.1.2 Usage. NCTS assigns a unique Identifier (number/name) to each NASA-sponsored conference (as defined in 2.6) and each foreign conference that at least one NASA employee plans to attend. All NASA employees and NASA conference support contractors can access NCTS's searchable list of these conferences and their Identifiers at <http://ncts.nasa.gov>. Directions for its use are provided in detail at the NASA Conference Resource Web site, <http://conference.nasa.gov>. All travel authorizations and all travel vouchers (i.e., expense reports) for NASA-sponsored and foreign conferences shall include the NCTS Identifier.

2.8.2 NASA-Sponsored Conferences.

2.8.2.1 Sponsoring Organization POC. The POC of any NASA organization sponsoring a conference shall prepare and submit an NF 1784, as described in 2.6.8 above. This includes conferences that are currently estimated to cost less than \$20,000, but for which the sponsor cannot clearly determine final costs to NASA are under \$20,000 (e.g., where attendee count/travel costs might increase sufficiently to make the total costs exceed \$20,000).

2.8.2.2 NCTS Moderator. Upon receiving an NF 1784, the NCTS moderator shall:

- a. Input the conference to NCTS.
- b. Notify the sponsoring organization POC of the conference's NCTS Identifier.
- c. Notify all Center/Office POCs and alternates that the event has been added to NCTS.

2.8.2.3 Attendees. If a prospective attendee thinks that an event may be a NASA-sponsored conference as defined in Section 2.6 of this NPR, the prospective attendee (or their travel preparer) shall search NCTS for it.

- a. If the conference is in NCTS, the prospective attendee (or their travel preparer) shall include its NCTS Identifier on the travel authorization and voucher.
- b. If the event is not in NCTS, the prospective attendee (or their travel preparer) shall notify the Center/Office conference reporting POC (listing can be found at <http://conference.nasa.gov>).

2.8.2.4 Center/Office conference reporting POCs. Upon receiving notification that an event that may be a NASA-sponsored conference has not been entered into NCTS, Center or Office conference reporting POCs shall determine whether the event is a conference and if it is, identify which NASA Center is most closely associated with the event (i.e., most likely sponsor) as follows:

- a. If the sponsoring Center or HQ Office is the conference reporting POC's own Center or office, the conference reporting POC shall ensure the sponsor organization prepares and submits a NF 1784 as required.
- b. If the sponsoring organization POC fails to do so promptly, the Center/Office conference reporting POC shall prepare and submit to both NSSC and the NASA travel policy coordinator an initial (place-holder) NF 1784 that includes the event's name, dates, and location, so it can be assigned an NCTS Identifier by NCTS.

c. The Center/Office conference reporting POC shall forward a copy of the placeholder NF 1784 and the NCTS Identifier Code to the sponsoring organization and request the sponsor organization to complete the final NF 1784 promptly. d. If the Center/Office conference reporting POC believes that the

conference is being sponsored by an organization within a Center or HQ Office other than his or her own, the Center/Office conference reporting POC shall notify the sponsoring organization's Center/Office conference reporting POC.

e. Upon receiving such notification, the sponsoring Center's/Office's conference reporting POC shall then take the steps outlined in 2.7.2.4.a-c above.

2.8.2.5 Changes for NF-1784. Any changes to an NF-1784 should be submitted using an NF-1784, but clearly identifying the form as an amended filing, listing the assigned NCTS Identifier in the title field.

2.8.3 Foreign Conferences.

2.8.3.1 Inputting a Conference to NCTS.

a. NASA employees planning to attend a foreign conference or their travel preparers shall search NCTS for the conference and use its NCTS Identifier on the travel authorizations (and after the event, on the vouchers).

b. If the event is not in NCTS, then the prospective attendee or their travel preparer shall input it. For event input instructions, see the NASA Conference Resource Web site, <http://conference.nasa.gov>.

c. The moderator reviews the input for completeness, assigns a unique conference Identifier, lists the new conference record in NCTS, and e-mails a confirmation to the requestor, typically within one working day.

2.8.3.2 Inputting a Traveler's Name to NCTS.

a. Some Centers allow only travel preparers, travel approvers, and/or the Center foreign travel coordinator to input a prospective foreign conference attendee's name to NCTS, whereas other Centers allow prospective attendees to input their own names. Prospective attendees shall follow their local Center process. General procedures are described at the Conference Resource Web site, <http://conference.nasa.gov>; Center-specific procedures are available from Center foreign travel coordinators and Center conference reporting POCs.

b. The moderator shall provide notification regarding whether the prospective traveler is within the 50-person ceiling.

c. No approvers shall approve travel to a foreign conference without first receiving notification from the moderator confirming that the traveler is within this limit.

2.8.4 Conference Determinations. Prospective attendees of foreign and NASA-sponsored events and NASA organizations sponsoring events can usually determine, without assistance, whether an event is a conference per the criteria in this directive and should be input to NCTS, or if it is not a conference. However, in instances where it is unclear whether an event is a conference if it and the event is either NASA-sponsored or foreign, users shall fill out and send to their Center conference reporting POC a Conference Determination Request Form (CDRF). The list of POCs and the CDRF are available at <http://conference.nasa.gov>. The CDRF shall only be used for foreign and/or NASA-sponsored events, not for non-NASA sponsored domestic events.

2.9 Preparing Travel Authorizations and Vouchers.

2.9.1 Special Procedures for Conferences.

2.9.1.1 "Conference" as Trip Purpose.

a. Persons preparing travel authorizations involving any conference attendance shall select "conference" in the electronic travel system Trip Purpose field.

b. Users shall select "conference" only for trips that include events meeting the definition of "conference" in 2. 4.

c. Users shall select "conference" for all conferences, even those that are domestic and non-NASA-sponsored. This enables compliance with the FTR and with other summary-level General Services Administration (GSA) travel reporting requirements.

d. Users shall select "conference" for any trip that involves a conference. This includes trips that include conferences, but have multiple purposes, even if some of the purposes are not conference-related.

2.9.1.2 NCTS Identifier. For foreign or NASA-sponsored conferences only, users shall select the conference's NCTS Identifier when preparing travel authorizations by using the drop-down menu in the electronic travel system's function code field. If the Identifier was not entered in the traveler's initial authorization, it is the traveler's responsibility to ensure that before creating the voucher an amended authorization is entered replacing the incorrect function code with the correct NCTS Identifier. This code facilitates accurate, immediate tracking of foreign conference attendee numbers via Business Warehouse (BW), as well as cost and attendance reports for NASA-sponsored conferences.

2.9.1.3 Non-Travel Costs. To ensure that non-travel costs are included in NASA-sponsored conferences cost reports, persons incurring non-travel costs connected with a NASA-sponsored conference shall provide the sponsoring organization's POC cost information and supporting documents as requested.

2.10 Reportable Expenses for NASA-Sponsored Conferences.

2.10.1 General Guidance.

2.10.1.1 Reportable Expenses. The following expenses for NASA-sponsored conferences are reportable:

a. Travel costs (e.g., transportation, lodging, per diem, and other travel expenses).

b. Non-travel costs (e.g., cost of developing conference materials and other costs associated with supporting a conference, such as handouts, exhibits, and facility rental).

- c. Costs for employees to attend conferences as judges, speakers, presenters, or panelists.
- d. Costs for detailees and persons traveling on invitational travel orders or otherwise sent to a NASA-sponsored conference by the Agency.
- e. All costs (including labor and burden) of NASA conference support contractors directly supporting NASA-sponsored conferences.

2.10.1.2 Non-Reportable Expenses. The following expenses for NASA-sponsored conferences are not reportable:

- a. Civil Service Employees Salaries. These are not reportable because they are not related to conferences.
- b. Conference costs paid for under a grant or cooperative agreement unless the terms of the grant or cooperative agreement require the recipient to host (and not just disseminate results at) a conference on behalf of NASA using the awarded funds and where NASA meets the definition of a primary sponsor in 2.6.3.
- c. Attendance costs of NASA contractors, unless they are attending as conference support contractors (2.10.1.1.e).

2.10.3 Other Information on Reportable Costs. The frequently asked questions (FAQ) section at the end of this document provides further information on conference reporting requirements. In addition, the NASA Conference Resource Web site, <http://conference.nasa.gov>, provides more information on reporting, including instructions and sample reports, and a list of the Center/Office conference reporting POCs.

2.11 Program Year (PY) 2009 Appropriations Spending Cap.

2.11.1 No New Commitments Using Unexpired PY 2009 Funds. The 2008 Authorization Act placed a \$5 million cap on the use of NASA FY 2009 appropriations for conference expenditures. As this limitation remains in force regarding these funds, no PY 2009 funds shall be used to incur new commitments or obligations in connection with a conference. For purposes of this paragraph, the term "conference" also applies to NASA-sponsored events that meet the definition of "conference" under NASA Interim Directive (NID) 9312.2 (including events not otherwise conferences but for meeting the "food exception" under NID 9312.2).

2.11.2 Adjustments. The sole exception to this prohibition is that commitments and obligations in the form of upward adjustments directly related to authorized conference travel approved in the electronic travel system before September 30, 2009, may be made after September 30, 2009, along with all appropriate costing and disbursements on obligations approved before September 30, 2009 (and related upward adjustments thereon).

2.11.3 Exceptions. There shall be no exceptions to this prohibition unless granted in writing by the Director of the Policy Division, OCFO, in response to a written request from the organization seeking the exception.

2.12 Records Management.

2.12.1 Sponsoring Organization. The sponsoring organization shall maintain copies of the NF 1784, the Post-Conference Report, and any other materials that might be necessary to substantiate them and make them available for inspection as requested by appropriate oversight organizations.

2.12.2 NSSC. The NSSC shall maintain searchable electronic records (e.g., PDFs) of all submitted NF 1784s and NF 1785s and a PDF archive of complete Post-Conference reports and quarterly summaries.

2.13 Conference Determination Chart.

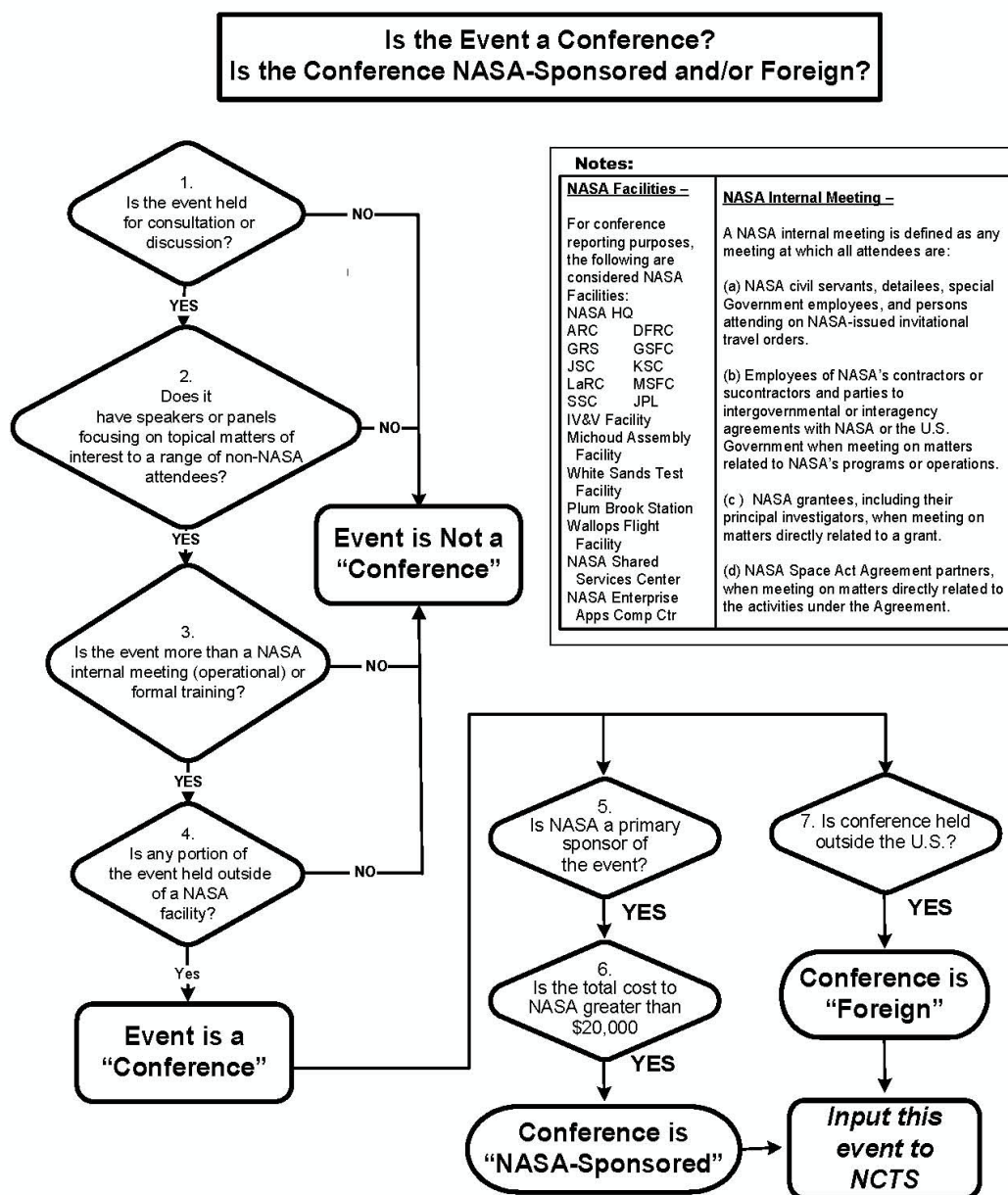
2.13.1 The chart on the next page provides a step-by-step guide for determining:

- a. Whether an event is a conference.
- b. If it is a conference, then whether it is NASA-sponsored or foreign (and thus needs to be input to NCTS).

2.13.2 If an event is determined to be a conference, it is necessary to select "conference" as trip purpose when preparing travel documents in the electronic travel system. This is true not only for foreign and NASA-sponsored conferences, but also for those that are domestic and/or non-NASA-sponsored. Although NASA no longer reports the costs by conference of each conference attended (except for foreign and NASA-sponsored conferences), the Agency still monitors its overall conference attendance spending and selecting the correct purpose in the conference purpose field facilitates this effort.

2.13.3 To determine whether an event that is neither NASA-sponsored nor foreign is a conference, simply use your best judgment and the guidance in this document. Do not submit a CDRF.

2.13.4 For events that are NASA-sponsored or foreign, if after reading the NID, using the decision chart, and reviewing the FAQs you are still unsure whether an event is a conference, consult your Center or HQ Office conference POC. The POC may ask you to submit a CDRF to facilitate the decision. A list of POCs and the CDRF form are available at the Conference Resource Web site, <http://conference.nasa.gov>.



2.14 Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

The following FAQs provide more detailed guidance for determining whether an event is a conference and whether a conference

is NASA-sponsored or foreign and must, therefore, be entered into NCTS. The first FAQs are grouped to correspond with this NPR's four criteria for what is a conference (See 2.4.a-d above) and are numbered according to the steps in the Conference Determination Chart (Figure 1).

1. Conference Criterion (a): Is the event being held for consultation, exchange of information, or discussion?

FAQ 1-1 (Name includes "conference"). For reporting purposes, should events whose name includes the word "conference" always be assumed to be conferences?

Answer : No titles can be misleading. The event's purpose, attendees, and subject matter are much more useful in determining whether it is a conference than whether its organizers call it a conference, meeting, exchange, discussion, etc.

2. Conference Criterion (b): Does the event have speakers or discussion panels focusing on topical matters that are of interest to and involve the participation of a range of participants from multiple agencies and/or nongovernmental entities?

FAQ 2-1 (Working groups). Are events entitled "working groups" considered conferences?

Answer : Usually not, but again, do not rely on the title. "Working group" meetings held in conjunction with association conferences, even if closed to all but subcommittee members, are typically considered part of the conference. However, working groups of members from multiple agencies addressing a specific, common operational issue (e.g., financial or personnel system configuration) and not a broader range of topical matters are not considered conferences.

FAQ 2-2 (Speakers, presenters, or judges). If a NASA employee serves as a speaker (including via the speakers' bureau), presenter, or judge at a non-NASA event, does that constitute conference attendance?

Answer : Generally, yes. The purpose of such appearances is usually outreach and awareness. However, presentations at local schools (primary or secondary) or events, such as festivals or state fairs are not considered conferences.

FAQ 2-3 (Grants and cooperative agreements). Should the conference-related costs of NASA grantees be reported?

Answer : No, unless the grant specifically requires the recipient to host (and not just disseminate results at) a conference on behalf of NASA with the awarded funds and the conference otherwise meets the criteria of a NASA-sponsored conference.

3. Conference Criterion (c): Is the event an internal NASA meeting or formal training?

Note: Neither internal NASA meetings nor formal training events constitute conferences.

FAQ 3-1 (Management/Governance meetings). Are internal meetings (operational, programmatic, and institutional management meetings) such as those required by NPD 7120 considered conferences?

Answer : No. Internal meetings are not considered conferences if held specifically for the purpose of governance of NASA or one of its organizational units or for carrying out a NASA program or project (i.e., an operational or "program-specific" purpose). Examples of such non-conference internal meetings include the NASA Advisory Council (NAC) and the Program Management Council (PMC).

FAQ 3-2 (Program meetings). Defining a conference as an "event held for consultation, exchange of information, or discussion" makes it sound as though many gatherings of NASA civil service employees with non-NASA persons are conferences. Is that correct?

Answer : No. If the sole purpose of an event is to discuss NASA business, such as plans or priorities for a specific NASA program, project, or mission support matter, then the event is not a conference. The definition of conference excludes routine NASA business, such as program/project reviews, site visits, launches, and advisory committee meetings, and also excludes public affairs events such as exhibits to which the general public is invited gratis.

FAQ 3-3 (Program-specific versus general nature). Is an event whose purpose is "discussion" of a specific program considered a conference?

Answer : It may or may not be, depending on both who attends and the nature of the subject matter. A "widely attended forum" held to disseminate research results is probably a conference. By contrast, if an event's attendees are all participating in a specific, NASA-funded project and the event's purpose is to discuss the project's progress and results, coordinate its activities, and/or identify next steps, it is probably an internal/programmatic meeting. Attendance by other agencies, contractors, and grantees who are involved in the program does not alter this conclusion.

If the program being discussed is not associated with a specific funded NASA mission, the analysis is more difficult. Especially when such meetings are open to the public and/or involve information exchange regarding multiple projects, it is necessary to evaluate each meeting case-by-case, carefully assessing all its characteristics to make a determination. If the event's main purpose is to promote general awareness of a program (project, grant, etc.), it is more likely a conference. If the main purpose is the specific planning, execution, or analysis of a program (project, grant, etc.), it is more likely an internal/programmatic meeting. For example:

(a) The Fundamental Aeronautics Annual Conference is a conference, since its purpose is to promote general awareness of the program and many of its attendees are members of the general public who are not specifically working on the program.

(b) Project Management (PM) Challenge was considered a conference in FY 2008 and FY 2011, since its focus was topical and of interest to a broad audience. However, in FY 2009, PM Challenge was structured as an internal NASA meeting and thus not considered a conference.

(c) The Fundamental Aeronautics Annual Review is not a conference because it is a formal program review. Its non-NASA participants attend primarily as review panel members, not to gain general awareness.

(d) Quarterly Program Management Reviews are not conferences, even if held offsite and attended by contractors or partners, as their purpose is program review, not general awareness.

(e) The following are examples of other events determined not to be "conferences:"

i. Required programmatic and institutional management meetings, including those identified in NPD 7120.

ii. Formal education or training classes.

- iii. Planning, programming, budgeting, and execution (PPBE) process budget reviews.
- iv. Routine program/project management meetings, including meetings with international program officials.
- v. Mishap Investigation Boards (usually at contractor facilities).
- vi. Program Management Reviews.
- vii. Management Council Meetings.

FAQ 3-4 (Division offsite meetings). Is my team's offsite meeting considered a conference?

Answer : Probably not. Such events usually qualify as NASA internal meetings due to the nature of both the attendees and the subject matter. The presence of an outside facilitator does not turn such a meeting into a conference. Even if outside participants other than facilitators attend such an event, it may still not qualify as a conference due to its subject matter. For example, the narrowly operational/programmatic focus of most lessons learned and strategic planning events typically keep them from qualifying as conferences. In a broader sense, topical meetings that lack a strictly operational focus (e.g., team-building events) may qualify as conferences.

FAQ 3-5 (JPL and other NASA contractors). If JPL or other NASA contractor employees attend an event, can it still qualify as a NASA internal meeting?

Answer : Yes. If all attendees are either NASA civil service employees or NASA contractors and the subject matter focuses on NASA programs or operations, the event is not a conference.

FAQ 3-6 (Facilitators). Does the presence of non-NASA facilitators, speakers, and presenters affect the determination of whether a meeting is a NASA internal meeting?

Answer : No, because of subject matter considerations. Outside facilitators and speakers are usually contractors whose participation relates to NASA programs or operations. Even when they are not paid contractors, their presence as speakers typically relates to NASA programs or operations.

FAQ 3-7 (Training). Are training events considered conferences?

Answer : Not usually, although in some cases they may be. An established course or set of courses in a classroom setting is not considered a conference, nor does holding such a course at a rented facility, (e.g., if attendance exceeds planned limits, necessitating rental of a local facility) make it a conference. Similarly, attendance at a university or professional school is not considered a conference. However, a widely attended event featuring a variety of topical meetings held at a hotel or other conference facility is a conference, even if some of its content can be seen as educational. Even if a participant's only reason for attending such an event is to update training on a specific area or maintain a certification, the more general nature of the meetings and their availability to a broad, general audience makes it a conference.

For example, events that would be considered conferences include the U.S. Office of Government Ethics' annual Government Ethics Conference, the Annual Federal Dispute Resolution Conference, American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics' (AIAA) Annual Conference on Small Satellites, the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) Workshop on Network Security, the High Tech Small Business Conference, and the Flight Test Safety Workshop (providing an open forum on flight test safety issues). An example of an event not considered a conference is a semester-long university or professional school class. Remember to apply the other criteria for determining whether an event is a conference, such as who attended, the subject matter, and whether it was held offsite: events attended only by NASA employees and held entirely at a NASA facility are by definition not conferences.

FAQ 3-8 (College degrees). Is travel/temporary duty (TDY) in connection with NASA-paid education in pursuit of a college degree considered a conference?

Answer : No. This is not a discrete event such as is typically connoted by the term "conference" (i.e., from several hours to a week or two), but rather an ongoing, periodic activity.

4. Conference Criterion (d): Is any part of the event held outside of a NASA facility?

Note: An event is not considered a conference if all of its sessions, meetings, presentations, and other activities are held on a NASA facility.

FAQ 4-1 (Agency). Does "Agency" only mean NASA or does it include other Federal agencies?

Answer : When used in the singular, "Agency" only means NASA not any other agencies.

FAQ 4-2 (NASA facility). What is considered a NASA facility?

Answer : The following sites and/or buildings are considered NASA facilities: all Centers (ARC, DFRC, GRC, GSFC, JSC, KSC, LaRC, MSFC, SSC, and NASA HQ), and JPL, Independent Verification and Validation (IV&V) Facility, Michoud Assembly Facility, White Sands Test Facility, Plum Brook Station, Wallops Flight Facility, NSSC, and the NASA Enterprise Applications Competency Center (NEACC) .

A more complete list is at the conference Web site, <http://conference.nasa.gov> .

FAQ 4-3 (Leased facilities). Are facilities (office buildings, sites, etc.) leased by NASA on a continuing basis considered to be NASA facilities if they are not located within the boundaries of a NASA Center or other NASA facility identified in the answer to FAQ 4.2?

Answer : Yes. Section 203(c)(3) of the Space Act authorizes the NASA Administrator to acquire facilities by purchase, lease, condemnation, or otherwise. 5. Is NASA a primary sponsor?

FAQ 5-1 (Proportion and nature of NASA support). If NASA pays for an exhibit booth or otherwise provides a minor level of funding in support of a conference, is the conference considered "held by" NASA (i.e., is NASA a "sponsor" or "primary sponsor")? What if the event is paid for partly by NASA grant funds, or uses a NASA logo?

Answer : None of the above is by itself sufficient to constitute "sponsorship." It is necessary to look at each conference case by

case.

With regard to providing support, minor participation costs such as for travel, exhibitions, or presentations do not constitute sponsorship costs, so if these were all NASA paid for, NASA is not a sponsor. Sponsorship entails more significant costs of holding an event, such as paying costs of hosting (e.g., facility rental) or underwriting (e.g., providing funds to a cosponsor or paying for brand awareness at the event) at a level that is more than de minimis, i.e., that is significant rather than trivial. Further, the question whether NASA is a primary sponsor depends on comparing NASA's contribution to that of any other sponsors. For example, NASA is typically not considered a primary sponsor if its contribution is significantly less (e.g., half or less) than the leading sponsors or, even if contributing the most of any sponsor, its relative contribution is minor (e.g., less than 20 percent of the total contributed). NASA is only a primary sponsor if it was either the conference's only sponsor or one of its principal cosponsors.

Awarding a grant does not necessarily make NASA a sponsor, even if the grantee uses some of the grant funds to host an event that otherwise meets the definition of "conference." A properly awarded grant is program-specific. There is one exception: if the terms of the grant specifically require the grantee to hold the conference, it is likely that NASA is a sponsor.

Finally, one should not assume that use of NASA's logo at a conference means that NASA is a sponsor of the conference; there are other circumstances under which NASA's logo may be legitimately used.

6. Is the total cost to NASA greater than \$20,000?

Note: For a conference to be reportable as "NASA-sponsored," NASA must have been a primary sponsor (see above, FAQ 5-1) and have expended at least \$20,000 on the event, including both travel and non-travel costs. However, even if NASA paid no travel costs, if NASA's other costs for the event exceeded \$20,000 and NASA was a primary sponsor, the event is considered a reportable NASA-sponsored conference.

FAQ 6-1 (Non-NASA costs). Should NASA-sponsored conference costs incurred by other Federal agencies be reported?

Answer : No. Do not report costs of a NASA-sponsored conference that another Government agency ultimately paid. For example, if NASA incurred conference costs but charged them back to another agency via a reimbursable agreement, do not report those costs, since they are not actually NASA costs. Only report those net realized costs shown by NASA's records. For example, do not report fully reimbursable conference travel arrangements; do report the unreimbursed portion of partially reimbursable arrangements.

FAQ 6-2 (Costs: estimates versus disbursements). For conference travel costs, should one report the recorded or estimated cost or the actual amount disbursed?

Answer : Report the amount shown in BW. If disbursements are available, use them. However, since typically reports are required soon after the conference ends, if disbursements are not available, use costs, and if costs are not available, use obligations. In all cases, indicate on the report whether you are using disbursements, costs, or obligations.

FAQ 6-3 (Contractor costs). Should NASA contractors' costs of participating in NASA-sponsored conferences be reported?

Answer : Usually not. Attendance costs of NASA contractors who are not supporting the conference at NASA's specific direction are not reportable. However, all costs of conference support contractors supporting NASA-sponsored conferences are reportable.

FAQ 6-4 (Conference support contractor costs). When reporting costs of NASA-sponsored conferences, should all costs connected with the event's conference support contracts or work orders be included, such as award fees and burden or other indirect charges?

Answer : Yes. If a contractor is helping the NASA sponsor organization plan and/or run the conference under a specific work order, task order, or other contract vehicle and is not simply present at the event as an attendee, the contractor's total conference-related costs are reportable.

7. Is the conference a "foreign conference?"

Note: Congress has prohibited NASA from sending more than 50 NASA employees to any one conference outside the U.S.

FAQ 7-1 (Limit applies regardless of funding availability). If funds are still available, does the 50-person limit on foreign conferences apply?

Answer : Yes. The limit is on how many civil service employees NASA sends, not their costs. Even if NASA's only costs are indirect (e.g., NASA pays employee's salary, but conference sponsor pays his/her travel costs), the attendee still counts against the 50-person limit. Moreover, even if the employee is on leave and pays for all costs in connection with attendance at the conference, the attendee still counts against the 50-person limit if representing NASA (e.g., presenting a paper).

FAQ 7-2 (NASA employees). For purposes of the 50-person limit, are JPL employees considered NASA employees?

Answer : No. Only those persons considered employees for purposes of 5 U.S.C., such as NASA civil service employees and detailees to NASA (for whom NASA is paying costs directly or by reimbursement to the detailing agency) are considered employees.

FAQ 7-3 (Foreign). What is considered "outside the United States?"

Answer : "United States" has the same meaning here as in the FTR, which defines the United States to include the 48 contiguous states, the District of Columbia, and the states and areas defined under the term "Non-Foreign Area," which includes the states of Alaska and Hawaii; the Commonwealths of Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Northern Mariana Islands, and the territories and possessions of the United States (excluding the Trust Territories of the Pacific Islands).

Note: The term "foreign conference" includes conferences held entirely at a NASA facility if the facility is outside the U.S.

FAQ 7-4 (Reimbursable travel). If a NASA employee is requested to present at an international conference and the sponsor pays travel/per diem expenses, does the NASA speaker count against the 50-person limit? What if the employee wishes to give a

presentation at or otherwise attend a foreign conference at his or her own expense while on vacation?

Answer : Even if the employee is on reimbursable travel, if NASA is paying the employee's salary during the trip, he or she is considered to be on official travel on behalf of the Government and counts against the limit. Employees are reminded to follow standard procedures for Agency acceptance of travel expenses from outside sources in such cases. (See also FAQ 7-1 above.)

If a NASA employee attends a foreign conference while on vacation, traveling at his or her own expense, and charges no costs to NASA (e.g., for shipping materials), and is not representing NASA (e.g., giving a presentation at all related to NASA or its missions/activities) attendance does not count against the 50-person limit. The limit is on the use of appropriated funds "to send or otherwise pay for attendance" at a conference. However, to ensure accurate records for NASA employee foreign conference attendance, all employees (even those on vacation) planning to attend a foreign conference shall request attendance via NCTS and obtain advance approval from OIIR. In addition, they must follow any requirements related to representing NASA externally. (See NPR 9700.1, Appendix A.)

FAQ 7-5 (Single conference with multiple tracks versus multiple conferences). If several foreign events are held at the same time in the same location but advertised as separate conferences, are they treated as separate conferences for purposes of the 50-person limit?

Answer : It depends. If conferences are structured in key aspects like a single event, they constitute a single conference for purposes of NASA's foreign conference attendance limitation. For example, the AIAA Guidance, Control, and Navigation and the AIAA Modeling and Simulation Technologies Conferences were advertised as separate conferences by AIAA in 2009 and 2010, but both were held at the same time and location, the same registration fee paid admission to sessions from both events, some sessions were listed in the agendas for both conferences, and a single fee could buy a program CD with materials from both events. They essentially functioned as two tracks in a single conference. On the other hand, if conferences are held separately in time (one after the other) and a separate registration fee is charged, they are considered distinct conferences even if held back to back at the same facility by the same sponsor. Similarly, independent meetings not part of the conference, such as those held in advance (like planning sessions) or at the same time (such as independent working group meetings held at the same time to take advantage of key participants being present at the same time and place) are treated as separate events; NASA employees attending these meetings, but not, otherwise, attending the conference are not counted towards the 50-person limit for the conference.

8. How do I obtain approval to attend a conference and process the necessary forms?

FAQ 8-1 (Approval steps). I want to go to a meeting that I think is a conference. How do I obtain approval to attend it, process the authorization, and then file a travel voucher for reimbursement?

Answer :

a. Determine whether the event is a conference and whether it is foreign or NASA-sponsored.

i. If it is clearly not a conference, simply proceed with normal travel authorization and vouchering, no other steps are required by this NPR.

ii. If it is clearly a conference but is neither foreign nor NASA-sponsored, select "conference" in the electronic travel system Trip Purpose field. Then proceed as usual for travel authorization and vouchering. Do not input the event into NCTS or use an NCTS Identifier; only foreign and NASA-sponsored conferences use NCTS Identifiers.

iii. If the event clearly is a conference and is either foreign or NASA-sponsored (or both), search for the event in NCTS (<http://ncts.nasa.gov>).

b. If it is a conference and foreign or NASA-sponsored, is it listed in NCTS?

i. If it is, note its NCTS Identifier and select that Identifier from the drop-down menu of function codes in the electronic travel system when preparing your travel authorization. Also, be sure to select "conference" as the trip purpose.

ii. If it is not in NCTS, but because it is either foreign or NASA-sponsored you think it should be there, then follow the guidance in 2.7 of this NPR and either submit a new record to NCTS or have one submitted, as your local Center requires.

c. After a new event is input to NCTS, the NCTS moderator will notify the submitter within one working day whether the event is accepted for inclusion in NCTS and if it is, will supply its Identifier and input the event to NCTS. Once you have the NCTS Identifier, follow the steps in 3.b.(i) above.

i. For foreign conferences, submit your travel authorization request to your approver at least five weeks before the planned departure date. After receiving your request, your travel approver will input your name into NCTS to include you on the list of NASA employees who want to attend the conference counting toward the 50-person limit. Your travel approver shall submit this request at least four weeks before the planned departure date. If NASA attendance at the conference is expected to be small, you will be promptly notified that you are within the 50-person limit. For conferences at which NASA attendance is expected to be larger, you may be placed on a "pending" list while OIIR, in consultation with appropriate Agency representatives, determines the final NASA-wide attendance allocation. If you receive official NCTS approval, proceed with your Center/Office's foreign travel process.

Note: NCTS approval simply means that you are approved with regard to the 50-person limit; you must still obtain your supervisor's separate approval for your attendance at the conference.

ii. For both foreign conferences and NASA-sponsored conferences, if after submitting your travel authorization you realize you forgot to use the appropriate function code/NCTS Identifier, then as soon as you realize the omission, file an amended travel authorization using the correct function code.

d. After attending the conference, submit your travel expense report as you normally do, including the NCTS Identifier on it if it is a NASA-sponsored or foreign conference.

Note: Additional information on conference attendance and reporting can be found at the conference Web site, <http://conference.nasa.gov>.

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